At Black Mesa East

by JbearInChief

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Summary: The story of Alyx Vance that begins one year before she meets Gordon Freeman. After Alyx realizes why we do not go to Ravenholm anymore, she meets a mysterious man that changes her life.

1. Chapter 1

At Black Mesa East, Alyx Vance and a group of rebels were sitting in the common area. All of the rebels were on edge because of Barney's cryptic warning that the Combine were possibly going to be attacking people suspected of being rebels. The rebellion so far was a very under-rooted concept that had been, for the time, very well-concealed from the combine. However, every so-often combine patrols would round up random people suspected of anarchy or treason and were shipped off to Nova Prospeckt or arrested.

However, Barney's message earlier seemed like there might have been an attack coming that was larger than the normal round-up because, as Barney said, MANY CP's were buzzing about it rather than one or two here and there. Naturally, the Underground Railroad and Black Mesa east, being the biggest resistance focuses, were on high-alert for a possible attack.

Suddenly a faint sound of an explosion rumbled through the air, followed by another. And then there were two more.

Many of the rebels began buzzing with panic. Alyx, herself, was only 18 years old and was, admittedly, panicked. However, her pride kept her from showing any sign of fear or distress. Instead, she sat obediently on an old couch awaiting further information.

Suddenly a voice rang from down the above the stair way, "Barney's here!"

Alyx ran up the stairs to meet Barney, who was in the airlock. He was cursing the airlock loudly as it scanned him thoroughly.

"GODDAMN stupid AIRLOCK cycle! Taking forever. WORTHLESS waste of TIME!"

When the cycle was complete the door opened and Barney emerged, looking very flustered.

"THEY'RE ATTACKING RAVENLHOLM!" Barney said, "Head-crab shells! Dozens of them. If not hundreds!"

There was a loud gasp and a shockwave ran through the air.

"We need all hands on deck. We gotta help evacuate the citizens there!"

* * *

><p>Barney and Alyx ran down the stairs, followed by a large group of rebels. They went through the tunnel, up the elevator and were in the entrance of Ravelholm.<p>

"Alright, you guys" Barney said, motioning to a large group of rebels, "Wait here, cover anyone who comes through, and send them down the lift to Black Mesa East.

The rebels obediently stayed by the lift. Alyx, Barney and another group of rebels ran through Ravelholm and split up. They were directing frantic citizens to the exit area, but many, many more were running around with head-crabs on their faces. The rebels tried their best to de-crab the Ravelholm people, but to no avail as most of the head-crabbed people were already turning into zombies.

The zombification process was quick and qrotesque- a headcrab would leap onto your head, stabbing through your skull with its sharp spiked claws. The spike claws would puncture your brain, destroying all higher brain function. The headcrab becomes in complete control, and trying to detach only the headcrab will still result in the death of the host. If a headcrab fully latched onto your face, you were immediately a lost cause.

In Ravenholm, it was a horrifying sight. Shells were continuing to fall into the small town; many zombies were shambling around, attacking everyone indiscriminately; and fires erupted around the town, in futile attempts to keep zombies away.

Alyx came upon a man dressed in a priest outfit in the middle of a small common square. He was shaking violently, wielding an old shotgun with a box of shells at his feet.

"Father!" Alyx said, "We have to go. Follow me."

"I CANNOT!" The priest growled in a thick accent, "I must stay with my people! This is my congregation! If I let them remain inâ€¦in thisâ€¦state they will never find salvation in heaven!"

"But, FATHER!" Alyx begged.

"GO, my dear! Save yourself! My work is of salvation! I must remain here!"

Alyx ran off to find Barney or someone who could help coax this man into evacuating. Meanwhile, shells were now pouring down like rain as Alyx ran around, dodging them. Finally she ran into Barney, who was looking very frantic.

"We have to get out of here!" he yelled.

"NO! There's still people around!" Alyx protested.

"It's too late! We have to get out!" Barney yelled, pulling on her.

"NOOO!" Alyx yelled as she tried to run back to the priest.

Barney had his arms fully around her now and was literally dragging her back to the elevator. They rode the elevator back down to Black Mesa east where citizens were being triaged from injuries they sustained in the attack.

Alyx turned angrily to Barney, prodding his finger into his chest.

"WHY did you take me out of there! There were citizens still there!" She yelled.

"Al, it was completely overrun!" Barney replied, "I'm sorry, but I was just lookin' out for you!"

"No you weren't!" Alyx said, storming off into her room.

* * *

><p>After thirty minutes of fuming, Eli walked into the room Alyx was in.<p>

"Sweetie, are you okay?" Eli asked softly.

"No," Alyx said, wiping tears from her eyes, "I never really doubted Barney before, but he made us leave when there were still people in Ravenholm."

"I know, baby," Eli said, hugging Alyx softly, "But the combine are over-running the place with those shells. With limited forces, you sometimes have to make tough decisions. If you wouldn't have gotten out of there when you did, who knows what would have happened. It's a tough situation and he's just as frustrated as you are about it. Try to see it from his shoes."

Alys sighed, "I guess you're right. I should probably go apologize and help out with the evacuees."

Alyx hugged her dad and went out of the room. She went into the common room where everyone was being treated for their injuries. Barney was attending to a rebel who was especially beat up and clawed up. Barney, himself, had a long slash on his left cheek, from his hairline to the middle of his cheek that was causing blood to run down his face and neck.

Alyx walked up to Barney, who looked solemn.

"Barney," Alyx said, "Are you okay? That looks pretty bad."

"Nah, I'm okay," Barney mumbled, clearly on edge around Alyx.

Alyx felt thoroughly terrible that Barney was tense around her, "Look, Barney, I'm really sorry for getting angry at you. I'm just upset, but I shouldn't have taken it out on you."

Barney stood up and smiled wearily, "It's okay, kiddo. I'm right there with you- I wish we could have saved everyone, butâ€¦it was getting really dangerous."

"I know, you're right," Alyx said. She gave Barney a warm hug before surveying his face.

"That looks bad. Are you sure you don't need anything?" she noted, looking at his face.

He shook his head, "I'm good. Just stings a little and needs to be cleaned up, but my face isn't gonna fall of in the meantime or anything."

"What happened?" Alyx asked.

"A stupid head-humper tried to jump on my face. I barely smacked it away in time," Barney replied with a look of deep disdain.

Alyx put her hand over her mouth, gasping. She almost cried at the thought of Barney- who was like an uncle to her-turning into a zombie. She now realized that he was right to make them leave when they did.

"Geez, Barney! Are you going to be okay?" Alyx asked.

"Don't worry so much! It's just a scratch." Barney said with a small smile. He was being quite modest, as the "scratch" was actually a pretty deep gash that was still causing blood to run completely down the left side of his face and neck.

"I got nothing as bad as this poor kid," Barney continued, nodding down at the person below him.

The man was severely injured. Zombies had clawed his chest and face and he was bruised pretty bad. Alyx surveyed him. Without the blood and scratches and bruises he looked like he was probably a pretty handsome man. He looked like he was in his twenties with dark brown hair. However, now he was bloodied and bruised almost beyond recognition. Alyx frowned, saddened by the poor man's misfortune.

"What happened to him?" Alyx asked, frowning.

"A bunch of zombies cornered him and were beating and clawing the hell out of him." Barney said with a frown, "Poor guy."

Alyx looked at the man, who was breathing shallowly and was completely passed out.

"Is he gonna be okay?" Alyx asked.

"Yeah, should be fine. Just some scratches and maybe a concussion. Just make sure he keeps breathing," Barney said with a sinister smirk.

Alyx nodded, "So you gotta go?"

"Yeah," Barney said, "Gotta sneak back into my barracks. I'll come back when I can. Probably a few days or so."

Alyx nodded and hugged Barney before he took off.

2. Chapter 2

Okay all- in case you haven't figured it out, I'm going to be writing about the deaf man that Alyx has a crush on before meeting Gordon Freeman. In an interview, Valve CEO Gabe Newell discusses a possible past love-interest for Alyx being a deaf man. I have a deaf grandfather and went back and forth with the idea of phonetically spelling-out the way hearing impaired people speak, or just writing their dialogue normally. In the end, I chose to just write it out in normal English, as to save time and make it easier to read. If you want to see the interview, go to .com/watch?v=j2LnP3JgbM0

I hope you enjoy my story and have so far. All reviews are warmly welcomed!

Alyx stayed with the man for the rest of the night. For some reason she didn't understand, Alyx was drawn to him- perhaps because she felt so bad for him, and perhaps because Barney made Alyx promise to take care of him. Two rebels carried him into a bedroom and laid him in a bed, while Alyx sat in a chair next to it, dozing off a little.

A few hours later, the man stirred. Alyx sat up and looked towards the bed. The man woke up and looked at Alyx.

"Whâ€¦whea gam eye?" The man muttered.

"What?" Alyx asked, now getting up and stepping towards the bed.

"Canâ€¦.can you hear me?" Alyx asked.

The man looked up at Alyx with wide eyes. He smiled a little and sat up, cleared his throat and looked at Alyx standing above him.

"I'm sorry," The man said in an odd tone, "You have to forg-give me, I'm mostly deaf. Can you speak up?"

"Oh," Alyx said, with no change in volume "I'm so sorry."

The man looked at her inquisitively and smiled again.

"Oh, oh yea. Sorry," Alyx said. "Can you hear me now?" Alyx said, her volume raised very slightly.

"Mostly trying to read your lips," the man said.

"I'm sorry, can you hear me now?" Alyx said, raising it more.

The man was staring at her intently, "Yes. Thank you."

"Do you remember what happened? Are you okay?" Alyx asked. Her volume was comparable to a person talking to someone at a large party- not completely yelling but noticeably louder.

"Yes. I am fine. I remember what happened, but where am I? What is this place?"

"Black Mesa East." Alyx replied, "It's a rebel base near Ravenholm. We brought you here because it's close and you can't really go back to any City right now."

The man nodded, "What's your name?"

"I'm Alyx Vance," she replied with a smile.

"I'm sorry, Fâ€¦Fence?" the man asked with a confused look.

"No. Vance. VANCE. Sorry, I mumble when I'm nervous." Alyx laughed, brushing her hair behind her ear.

"I don't mean to make you nervous," the man said, "Do I make you nervous because I'm deaf or because I'm so handsome with all these claw marks."

Alyx laughed, "The second one, I guess."

The man smiled, "I'm Eric Chandler," the man said, "Is there a bathroom where I can wash up?"

"Yes, around the corner on the left." Alyx said, motioning out of the door.

When Eric returned, Alyx was sitting in the chair. He was still scratched but the blood was washed away from his face. He was very handsome, indeed. His face was very angular, with a squared chin and a sharp jaw leading to high cheekbones. He had a slightly broad, triangular nose and beautiful blue eyes. Alyx blushed slightly, but then got up and headed towards the door.

"Well, do you need anything?" Alyx asked.

"No, I'm okay. Thank you." Eric replied with a smile.

"Okay. Well I'll let you sleep." Alyx said.

"Goodnight, Miss. Vance," Eric said.

Alyx walked out of the door, looking back one last time and smiling before rounding the corner and going back to her room.

* * *

><p>The next morning Alyx made her way to the dining area very early, and found Eric was already sitting at a table, looking around the place.<p>

"Hi, Eric," Alyx said.

"I think you said 'hi', so hi, Alyx Vance," Eric said.

Alyx smiled, "I'm sorry," she said with a raised voice, "So how are you feeling today?"

"It's okay," Eric said, "you'll get used to it after awhile. And, I'm feeling a lot better now. Thanks for taking care of me."

"Well, it was mostly Barney. I came in later."

"Well I guess I'll just have to thank this 'Barney' fellow, and let him know that you stole all of his credit." Eric said with a smile.

Alyx laughed warmly.

A Vortigaunt came in and brought them food. They finished their food and Eric turned to Alyx.

"So what do you do for fun around here?" Eric asked, smiling.

"Well, just hang out, there are some books to read and a few games- like chess and checkers. I have been working on my robot lately. He's about shoulder-high right now, but I want to make him a lot bigger."

She began lowering her voice as she continued. Eric strained to look at her and read her lips, but she kept looking down at her feet and making it hard to look at her mouth.

She looked up finally and saw Eric staring very intently at her.

"Sorry!" Alyx said, slightly exasperated, "I keep lowering my voice. I'm so sorry!"

"It's not your fault. It's hard to adjust to. I'm sure it's also hard to understand me- I know I don't pronounce things right."

Alyx frowned slightly. It wasn't impossible to understand him, but he did have the tone and inflection similar to someone with a severe cold. She felt bad because there was a severe gap of understanding between them- and, she imagined, there was a gap of understanding between him and most everyone else.

"Is this how you usually have to communicate with people?" she asked, making sure to maintain an appropriate volume.

"Well, I taught Eddie- the person I lived with in Ravelholm- sign language, so we could communicate better andâ€¦well, quieter."

"Oh. Wow. That's cool," Alyx said, "Could you teach ME sign language?"

"You want to learn sign language?" Eric asked, eyebrow furrowed.

"Absolutely! That would be great. Well, I meanâ€¦if you don't mind teaching me."

"No. Not at all. It'll keep me busy here." Eric said with a smile.

He turned and faced her, "Ok. Let's just start with the alphabet." Eric said.

He ran through it about three times until Alyx remembered it fully. Eric was happy that she was a very fast learner.

* * *

><p>Over the next six months, Alyx and Eric hit the sign language lesions very hard. Alyx felt slightly guilty that she didn't work on D0G like she promised him, but she had D0G sit in on the lesions with them in order to him to learn, too.<p>

A few days in a row, while Alyx was out on supply runs for the base, Eric ran through the entire dictionary in sign language once with D0G in order for Alyx to be able to practice with him if Eric got tired or went to sleep. Alyx didn't sleep much, so she was grateful that Eric taught D0G sign language for her to practice. D0G would hoot in approval if she got words right, and shake his head with a low groan if she messed up. He couldn't sign himself with his robotic hands, but he was still a valuable companion to practice sign language on.

3. Chapter 3

A month later, Alyx was getting very used to sign language and was having conversations with Eric now. One day, Barney came to check up on the people at Black Mesa East, as he did every so-often. Eric left Alyx to practice with D0G, and she signed him to do certain tasks, like "get your ball," "pick up that crate" etc.

Eric approached Barney, looked around and finally asked, "Barney, can I talk to you in private?"

"Sure thing, Eric." Barney replied, walking along with him to a bedroom.

Eric closed the door behind him and looked at Barney.

"Barney, I need to ask you a favor." Eric said.

"Uhm, sure. What is it?" Barney asked. Barney was naturally louder in the way he spoke, so he never had any problem talking with Eric.

"Well, this has been bugging me for years, but since you're a civil protection officer, I think you might be able to help me." Eric explained.

Barney looked curious and nodded slightly.

"Well," Eric continued, "When the Combine invaded, I was in Indiana. I joined the forced trying to fight them off, but I was shot and woke up a week later in a hospital. The combine then took me and relocated me to City 17. From there I was almost sent to Nova Prospeckt because

I'm deaf, so I took refuge in Ravenholm. Because of that, I've never been able to try and search for my family."

Barney sighed, knowing the experience of waking up in a combine-controlled hell.

"So anyways," Eric continued, "I can't explain why, but I just have a feeling that my family is still alive. I don't know why, but I just KNOW that they are still alive. I feel it in every fiber of my being, and I have to find them!"

Barney looked down at his feet, also knowing that feeling of inexplicable conviction to the thought that someone was still alive somewhere out there.

"So, can you PLEASE look in the combine databases and try to find them? PLEASE! I will be indebted to you forever if you would do me this favor."

Barney felt very bad for him, and sighed deep.

"Yeah, I guess I could do that," Barney said "But it'll take a while, because I can only spend so much time searching for people without drawing suspicion, ya know."

Eric nodded.

"And, you might need to be aware that theyâ€¦.they might not beâ€¦well, you know," Barney said, rubbing his neck.

"I understand. But I just need to know SOMETHING. Not knowing ANYTHING is killing me. I just need some sort of information. Sort of closure- even if the outcome isn't as I would want."

"Man, Eric, I'll tell ya, I know EXACTLY where you're coming from on that." Barney said with a frown.

"Your family is missing, too?" Eric asked.

"No, not my family," Barney replied, "Unfortunately, they've all passed away, but there's one person I used to know who I can't locate for the life of me- dead or alive! I have the same strong, gnawing feeling as you do- that she's alive somewhere, but I can't find her in ANY database. I would like some information- ANY information."

"Well, I really hope you find her," Eric said with a smile.

Barney smiled slightly and nodded, "Thanks, Eric. Just write down any information you can give me about your family. Full names, former social security numbers, features, the works. I know it's been years since you've seen them, but any detail would help me out."

Eric nodded and trotted off to find a paper and pen.

* * *

><p>Alyx was slightly burned out from practicing with D0G, and decided to find Eric. She saw him writing furiously on a piece of printer paper. She walked up to him and put her hand on his shoulder.

Unaware of Alyx coming, Eric yelped and jumped when she put a hand on his shoulder.<p>

Alyx jumped back a little, putting her hands up before signing to him "Sorry! Sorry. Sorry!"

"It's okay," Eric said, "And I'm proud of you for signing first. You're really getting the hang of it."

Alyx sat down next to Eric, peering at the paper.

"What are you doing?" Alyx asked.

"I'm writing down the names and descriptions of my family, hoping that Barney might be able to locate them somewhere in the combine databases." Eric replied, showing Alyx the paper.

The paper read:

John Chandler: father

Currently 55 years old. Dark brown curly hair. Brown eyes. Straight nose

Square face. Brown beard. Scars on both knees. Wears glasses.

Mary Chandler: mother

Currently 53 years old. Light brown hair, blue eyes.

Triangular face. Thin build. Sloped nose.

Katherine (Kate) Chandler: sister

Currently 23. Light brown hair. Has heterochromia- one eye is blue one eyes is green and brown.

Round face. Thin build. Sloped nose. Scar on lower abdomen.

Jason Chandler: brother

Currently 27 years old. Dark Brown hair. Dark brown eyes.

Rectangular face, sloped nose. Athletic build. Possible goatee. Has tattoos on legs and arms.

Alyx looked at his family's description, intrigued.

"Your sister has two different colored eyes?" Alyx asked.

"Yeah, heterochromia. It's a genetic condition that runs in my mom's family. My aunt and grandma had it, too."

"Oh," Alyx replied, "And isâ€¦.yourâ€¦.condition- is that genetic, too?"

"No. I was hit by a car when I was 11, which caused damage to my brain and inner ear."

"Oh, god." Alyx said, "I'm so sorry."

Eric shrugged, "No big deal."

Eli called Alyx from down the hall, inaudible to Eric, but Alyx stood up to answer her call.

"Well," she said, putting a hand on Eric's shoulder, "I really hope you find your family."

Eric grabbed Alyx's hand with his own, and brought it down towards his chest. He didn't say anything, but instead smiled so warmly that the warmth of his smile traveled all throughout Alyx's body, causing her to blush.

She nervously smiled back, withdrew her hand from his and walked down the hall to meet her father.

4. Chapter 4

Over the next two months, Alyx spent almost all of her time with Eric. Either they were doing sign language lessons, or he would watch her work on D0G while he read or sometimes even helped. One night, they sat in his room playing chess. Eric won again, and looked up at her with a mischievous smile. Alyx feigned outrage, but was actually laughing and smiling.

When their laughter died down, Eric looked at Alyx with his piercing blue eyes. Alyx smiled nervously, tucking her hair behind her ear like she always did when she was nervous. Eric smiled for a moment before opening his mouth so speak.

"You're incredibly beautiful, you know." He said softly.

"Thâ€¦thank you." Alyx whispered, nervously tucking her hair behind her ear once more.

"And funny. And painfully sweet. It's hard to not want to be around you," Eric continued. "Being as beautiful as you are, I'll bet you have men clamoring to just be around you. Me, though, I don't really know what it's like. No one's lining up to go out with the deaf guy, you know?"

He gave a small laugh, but Alyx looked at him.

"Well, actually," she said, raising her voice for him to hear, "I'veâ€¦I've never had a boyfriend."

Eric smiled, "LIAR!"

Alyx started to laugh, "I'm serious! Really."

Eric smiled and leaned forward. Alyx's heart was beating like a humming bird in her chest. Eric closed his eyes, leaning even closer until his mouth met Alyx's. Eric put his right hand on her neck, running his thumb over her cheek and jaw.

Alyx inhaled deep and kissed him back. Her tongue timidly ran across his, and Alyx ran her hand over Eric's chest.

When they finally parted, Alyx backed away a little bit.

"Okay," she said, nervously laughing, "Well, Iâ€¦I'm gonna go to bed."

"Ooookay," Eric said with a sigh.

Alyx left the room and Eric slumped onto the floor.

* * *

><p>The next day Alyx spent most of the day in the scrap yard working on D0G. Around dusk, Eric came out and walked up to her. He rested against a large cargo crate and folded his arms, looking at her.<p>

"I'm sorry, apparently," Eric said, looking up at her.

"No. No, don't be. It'sâ€¦Iâ€¦ugh," Alyx was flustered, flushed with a mix of emotions.

"Look," Alyx said, finally regaining her composure, "It's nothing to be sorry about. I like you, and all, but Iâ€¦I just don't think it's appropriate. We're living in a combine hell, it's not really time for starting any sort of a relationship."

Eric cocked his head, "In a world where you might not live to see tomorrow, I don't understand what reasoning there would be to deny your emotions. But I'll respect your opinion."

Eric walked back inside the base. D0G gave a small, curious woot and Alyx rested her head onto his.

"I know, D0G, I know. But I can't really justify it." Alyx said softly.

D0G gave another small, almost sad drawn out "wooooot."

* * *

><p>For the next three months, while Alyx didn't allow herself to have any more slip-up's, she did decide to not avoid Eric. Although they were mutually flirtatious, Alyx continually kept down her growing feelings. One day, however, Barney walked into Black Mesa East, looking for Eric.<p>

"Eric, I got some good news for you," Barney said with a wide grin.

Eric, clearly giddy with excitement, looked at Barney with eager eyes.

"I found your family," Barney said, still smiling wide, "All of them. In City 8, which is in London."

"Oh my god!" Alyx said with a smile.

"OH MY GOD!" Eric repeated, even louder. He practically jumped into Barney's arms and gave him a huge, tight hug.

"Barney!" Eric half-yelled, "THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!"

Eric parted from Barney and ran towards Alyx. He scooped Alyx up and gave her a huge hug, lifting her up in the air while Alyx laughed.

"It was because of your sister," Barney explained, "The different colored eye thing was a huge search factor that really narrowed it down!"

Eric was beaming with elation. He couldn't believe they were all alive

"So there's a transfer train leaving for City 8 on Friday," Barney said, "I can get you on that one, otherwise I don't see another transfer for at least the rest of the year. City 8 is very large, so they are going to stop taking transfers there."

Eric gasped, "Oh, no no no. I have to go this week, then."

"That's three days awayâ€¦" Alyx mumbled, saddened. However, her complaint was not heard by Eric or even Barney, as they began plotting the transfer. Alyx slipped out of the room, down the hall into her room where she began crying.

She only allowed herself to cry for like five minutes, afraid of Eric or Barney barging in and catching her. She quickly cleaned herself up, wiping tears away from her eyes. Sure enough, Eric came in ten minutes later, smiling.

He told Alyx everything about his family- how they were transferred from Indiana to London and were miraculously kept together in one apartment. He talked about how he was going to get transferred into the same apartment and would, after so many years, be reunited with his family.

Alyx smiled, but couldn't help be a little bummed out.

5. Chapter 5

She spent the next two days hanging out with Eric for what might have been the last time. She volleyed back and forth between taking Eric's advice and letting him know how much she felt for him since it was their last days together, or keeping her mouth shut. In the end, her stubbornness won out, as she reasoned that she didn't want to make Eric feel guilty for going to be with his family. She felt that if she were to confess her love for Eric, he would feel guilty for- or worse, second guess- his decision to leave.

The next day, Alyx dressed up in a citizens' blue jumpsuit in order to accompany Eric to the train station. They were mostly silent- unable to find the right words for the situation they were in.

When the time came, she gave him a very long hug before he got on the train.

As Eric boarded the train, Alyx furiously held back tears and fought back the urge to jump on the train with him. He sat in the back, his

face almost pressed against the window smiling at her. He then leaned back a little, raising his hands up to the window. Alyx could see him signing to her.

"I will see you again, I promise. I will not forget you."

Alyx bit her cheeks hard to keep from crying. She raised her hands and signed back:

"I will hold you to that."

Eric smiled momentarily, but suddenly frowned and signed back, "This is the hardest goodbye."

Alyx looked down at her feet, still feverishly fighting back tears. Suddenly the train lurched forward a little and it slowly began inching away.

"Goodbye, Eric," Alyx signed to him.

"Only until I see you again," he signed as the train pulled away.

Alyx waited until the train was completely out of sight until she allowed herself to cry. She cursed her stubbornness that kept her from showing emotion in front of Eric. She also cursed her stubbornness that kept her from telling him how she felt about him. She realized that, though love might seem trivial in a apocalyptic combine-controlled world, it is better to tell someone how much you care for them now rather than never. She wondered, through tears and sniffles, if she would ever see Eric again. She had a strong feeling she would one day, but wondered if that was simply her being optimistic.

6. Chapter 6

Alyx spent the next two months working on building D0G bigger than ever, standing about two feet above even Alyx. When she was finished one sunny day, she marveled at her triumph, but it was short-lived as she was called upon to go help Dr. Kleiner finish installing his teleport. Things were getting more heated lately with the combine, and having a safer way to transport citizens was growing increasingly more necessary.

She left for Kleiner's lab and got there on a Monday and finished the teleport on Tuesday night. On Wednesday morning, after returning with supplies for Dr. Kleiner and her, Dr. Kleiner told her that she had to sneak out and find someone named Gordon Freeman- an old colleague of Kleiner and her father. Kleiner seemed frantic and urgent, so she set out immediately, searching for this Dr. Freeman fellow. As she climbed along the roofs of City 17 she heard the sounds of Civil Protection units talking about "anonymous, unidentified person" and figured it was Freeman. As she ran to catch up with the C.P.'s, she wondered how someone named Gordon Freeman was causing such a stir in the city.

**That's it, folks! Hope you enjoyed this story. I feel that Alyx is a tomboy-type who wouldn't show a lot of emotion towards men, other than short uncontrollable and subconscious bursts of emotion. I think

she's a guarded, tough woman and hopefully I portrayed that well. All reviews are welcome and thanks for reading! **

End
file.